

Saskatoon:

Unit 3, 844-51st St. East
Saskatoon, SK S7K 5C7
Tel (306) 975-4725
Toll free (888) 844-8886
Fax (306) 975-4728
vellacott.mp@shawlink.ca

**Ottawa:**

Suite 610, Justice Bldg.
House of Commons
Ottawa, ON K1A 0A6
Tel (613) 992-1899
Fax (613) 992-3085
Vellacott.M@parl.gc.ca
www.mauricevellacott.ca

HOUSE OF COMMONS
CANADA

Maurice Vellacott, MP
Saskatoon-Wanuskewin

STATEMENT
May 10, 2006

Regrettably, I see displayed a more reckless partisan nature by the Liberals on the Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Committee than I have in all my 9 years as a Member of Parliament. They seem to think that they have some divine right to govern and it is greatly upsetting to them when the public judges otherwise. Unfortunately, in this case, I fear that their agenda of bitter partisanship will submerge aboriginal issues and make it extremely difficult to accomplish anything productive on behalf of our aboriginal brothers and sisters in this committee in this parliament. I dearly hope it turns out otherwise.

I believe our Conservative Party will make a serious effort to do right by aboriginal people and I will exert my influence to that end. I believe that the availability of 1.075 billion dollars in the first year in the recent budget for the objectives of the Kelowna Accord will make a good first start. I commend Minister Prentice for having done the right thing in bringing a speedy resolution to the Indian residential school claims. As a father of 4 children and soon to be 5 grandchildren, I think it a terrible blot on our Canadian history to rip precious children out of the arms of their parents to forcibly have them in schools of the government's choosing. To those who argue, that it was intended to benefit the Indian children, I say that is not for the government to decide those matters. As a present day Conservative and classical liberal, upholding parental autonomy is a core principal for me. My heart grieves when I think of the conversations I've had with precious First Nations people who recount to me the tragedy and the dysfunction created by losing out on those vital formative years with their own family. They could never gain that back. They've told me they were driven to alcoholic or other addictions to mask the yearning void in their lives, and without proper parenting role models, they perpetuated the cycle. My First Nations nephew and niece were born with fetal alcohol syndrome and it impairs their lives to this day. To be frank, I know that a base payment of \$10,000 per certified attendee plus \$3,000 per year in attendance, will never replace those lost years and lost generations, but it is a sincere statement of regret, of repentance, in respect to that sad chapter for which we will continue to pay the social costs in the years ahead. To paraphrase the words of a wise book, "The impact of the sins of one generation are passed on sometimes as far as the third and fourth generations." To make amends in respect to the Indian residential schools is the right thing to do morally, legally and economically, as protracting it would cost far more from a fiscal point of view. I have pressed this case with my caucus peers.

I have appreciated working with Conservative colleagues on this committee, and have found the two Bloc Members, Yvon Lévesque and Marc Lemay, constructive in their proposals in

the launch of our committee work plan. I bear them no ill will and realize that they take directions from their Whip and Leader in the machinations and maneuverings of a minority parliament. Jean Crowder has attempted to be helpful in committee deliberations and Nancy Karetak-Lindell displays a particular concern for her Inuit people. However, the tone of the committee has been so poisoned by the tactic of Liberal Ms. Neville, that I hereby submit my resignation as Chair of this committee and I have asked our Whip Jay Hill to provide an opening for me on another committee instead. I feel this is best for now. I'm saddened as I voluntarily remove myself from this committee, in that I had hoped, before this earthly life is over, in some modest way, to contribute to improving living conditions for First Nations, Métis and Inuit. I submit to a sovereign God to provide me that opportunity at some point in the future.

In these difficult days, I am grateful for the support of my caucus colleagues and my leader. I have appreciated the expressions of encouragement from members of other parties and affirmative messages from across the country.

In the meanwhile, in the immediate weeks ahead, I will keep my commitments to meet a number of aboriginal groups and individuals, and will continue to meet such people from my constituency as the opportunities arise; whereas other aboriginals across the country will be best served, in the foreseeable future, by sharing their important concerns with my colleagues on the committee, as my energies and time will be devoted to another committee. I will continue to give attention to the serious agricultural issues through my riding and in the country. With the help of excellent staff, I will be able to keep as a top priority, serving the many and varied needs of my constituents, advocating for workers, students, seniors, and the poor. As I become aware of particularly egregious situations, I will speak out for the dispossessed around the world. I will continue to enjoy learning from immigrants as I do ethnic outreach for the Conservative Party. With my wife's consent, I will accept some speaking invitations to promote historic monogamous marriage.

If my wife and 2 younger boys could vote today, they would have voted for more of my time. Getting to see my wife at ten or eleven o'clock each evening in the recent weeks, with my younger boys sound asleep for several hours, is no way to model family values. Now I'll get to put in long days but still have time with my wife and boys in order to practice what I preach.

On the surface, it appears that my views on the necessity of judicial restraint by Chief Justice Beverley McLachlin and the other judges on the Supreme Court precipitated the non-confidence motion. However, in recent days, other issues have been pointed out in which I have attempted to give voice to the voiceless and vulnerable. I have no regrets about speaking out for equal justice for aboriginals, proportionate justice for policemen Ken Munson and Dan Hachen, and basic justice for expectant women and their pre-born children. I have seen the evil face of racism against my First Nations nephew, niece and cousin. I have no regrets about speaking against racism in this country and in Sudan. Humanly speaking, I know there is a cost, but I can do no other, because this life is too short, and ultimately I long to hear, "Well done!" from the One who is over all, at the time when it matters most of all!